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CASE STUDY

MultiPlan Portal Framework The Business Challenge

MultiPlan's business partners and customers needed automated access to client and patient information. MultiPlan initially provided a self-service portal using aging Cold Fusion applications with Oracle databases as the data store. This solution lacked the scalability and flexibility to integrate to enterprise systems or re-use components to develop new applications faster. In addition, their current system was unable to support Rich Internet Application (RIA) development challenges.

Solution

After a thorough evaluation of a half dozen products, MultiPlan selected Bluenog RichPortal to ultimately replace their Cold Fusion applications. Bluenog RichPortal is a component of Bluenog ICE™, an integrated suite of commercial content management, portal and business intelligence software based on open source projects.

Overview

MultiPlan is a leading provider of healthcare processing services. Their logo is likely on the back of the medical benefits card in your wallet. Founded in 1980, MultiPlan is the nation's oldest and largest supplier of independent, network-based cost management solutions. Their network products process some 65 million claims annually and serve more than half a million healthcare providers and an estimated 40 million consumers.

Given its diverse constituency and large claim volume, self-service has always been a core MultiPlan offering. When MultiPlan's applications were initially developed, Cold Fusion was the predominant web development tool. MultiPlan spent many years developing reusable Cold Fusion libraries for use in its 20-30 Cold Fusion applications. In 2007, MultiPlan management decided to research technologies that would refresh their infrastructure to keep pace with the latest industry innovations.

Technical Challenge

The Claim Processing site was MultiPlan's biggest and most heavily used system. Its users could search claims by ID, doctor's name and other criteria. The Cold Fusion version of this application had a rich entitlement infrastructure and highly customized user interface. There was a significant amount of JavaScript in the current application, which made it large, cumbersome and brittle. The ultimate goal was to create an easier to maintain rapid application development environment that leveraged current industry-standard libraries, frameworks, and tools.

MultiPlan has always taken a methodical approach to application development. Their goal has been to create a set of reusable shared services that can dramatically reduce the time it takes to assemble new applications. Customizability to meet their specific needs was also an important requirement. As such they thoroughly assessed any new technology's "out of the box" functionality as well as its extensibility.

Getting Started

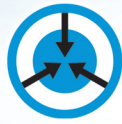
By Fall 2007, making new updates/changes to their existing Cold Fusion-based applications had become a real challenge. MultiPlan started evaluating new portal technologies. After an initial evaluation of various products, a common dilemma set in. The closed-source commercial products not only had more functionality than needed,

continued on reverse side

“The Bluenog RichPortal framework was the perfect fit for us. One of the big differentiators was the pricing model – we can grow our enterprise framework without having to worry about our software infrastructure costs. This gives us the flexibility to focus on growing our business value, as we should.”

— Keith Bush
SVP, IT
MultiPlan





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MultiPlan's portal framework integrated with a wide array of enterprise technologies:

- Enterprise Data Management: Oracle 9i, Oracle10g, SQL 2005
- Business Intelligence: BusinessObjects, QlickView from Qliktech
- Search Engine: NameSearch by IntelligentSearch
- Identity Management and Security: openIAM
- Enterprise Service Bus: Cape Clear
- Enterprise Systems: BusinessObjects Data Quality XI

they often didn't keep pace with the latest technologies, and had a much larger than anticipated price tag. Conversely, the open source projects evaluated had the functionality desired and could easily integrate with the latest technologies. However, they didn't offer the support or upgrade path needed to run and maintain MultiPlan's critical business applications.

In November 2007, MultiPlan evaluated Bluenog RichPortal. MultiPlan found that it offered the best of both worlds – the latest technology and all source code included – at a price that fit their budget. A proof of concept was conducted in December which verified that Bluenog could support the variety of RIA tools MultiPlan had been evaluating, including DOJO, EXT and YUI. The effort then began to replace the Cold Fusion infrastructure with Bluenog RichPortal and the Bluenog ICE suite. Bluenog ICE is an integrated suite of content management, portal and business intelligence software. It's a cost-effective, enterprise-caliber solution that dramatically cuts application development time and infrastructure management costs. A commercial product built on open source projects, Bluenog ICE re-integrates these projects into a single supported enterprise platform.

Solution Details

MultiPlan believed heavily in scalable and reusable frameworks. With that in mind, the new infrastructure needed to work with their existing Enterprise Service Bus (Cape Clear). Bluenog ICE's seamless integration with existing commercial and open source products/systems provided a perfect development environment using the latest client and server side technologies to build scalable RIA. This would enable them to create server-side services that could communicate and deliver rich information back to the client using a variety of RIA toolkits. After a thorough evaluation, EXT was chosen as the RIA toolkit of choice. Integration with identity management

tools was also required. Bluenog Solutions assisted in the evaluation of an open source identity management toolkit that would integrate with Bluenog ICE. It was also critical to enforce security at the portlet level as well as AJAX calls made by the RIA layer. The flexible and extensible nature of Bluenog's product offers a solid foundation to secure AJAX requests. Bluenog provided MultiPlan with a guide on how to implement an extensible framework for secure AJAX calls.

Business Impact

MultiPlan now has a modern framework for building out their next generation applications. It is estimated that the cost to complete was less than half that of alternative products.

This framework allows them to mix multiple "mini-apps" together into separate applications that work seamlessly, all with a consistent, rich user interface. This rapid application development happens in weeks instead of months.

MultiPlan's management has been particularly pleased with how easily third party applications were integrated into the Bluenog ICE framework. They feel they've found the best solution to meet their needs going forward. ●

Bluenog is an enterprise software and solutions company that specializes in integrated content management, portal, and business intelligence. Leading organizations rely on Bluenog products to build and deploy Rich Internet Applications (RIA), and manage dynamic website content at a fraction of the cost of traditional alternatives. Bluenog Solutions Group meets our customers' unique challenges with pragmatic combinations of commercial and open source software. Headquartered in Piscataway, N.J., Bluenog is also an Oracle and Actuate reseller. For more information, visit www.bluenog.com.